

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between said top sheet and said back sheet;

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer applied in a predetermined stripe, dot, or lattice pattern on one surface of said top sheet on a side mating with skin of a wearer such that the skin-protective ingredient is released from said one surface of said top sheet to form an oily film on skin of the wearer while contacting the skin of the wearer; and

a support layer formed over said skin-protective ingredient containing layer for retaining said skin-protective ingredient on said one surface of said top sheet and isolating said skin-protective ingredient containing layer from skin of the wearer, said support layer being soluble in water;

at a temperature higher than or equal to 25°C, solving in water of said support layer being promoted, and/or at a relative humidity of at least 30%, absorbing of moisture or solving in water of said support layer being promoted for exposing said skin-protective ingredient containing layer to skin of the wearer for permitting transfer of said skin-protective ingredient to skin of the wearer.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1,

wherein said support layer is formed of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of polyethylene oxide having a molecular weight of from 100 to 500,000, polypropylene glycol having a molecular

Claim 8 (currently amended): An absorbent article comprising:

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer applied in a stripe, dot, or latticepredetermined pattern on one surface of said top sheet such that a skin-protective ingredient is released from said one surface of said top sheet and transferred to skin of a wearer to form an oily film on skin of the wearer, said skin-protective ingredient containing layer being in a liquified state at 35 C or higher; and

a support layer formed over said skin-protective ingredient containing layer for retaining said skin-protective ingredient on said one surface of said top sheet and isolating said skin-protective ingredient containing layer from skin of the wearer, said support layer being soluble in water;

at a temperature higher than or equal to 25°C, solving in water of said support layer being promoted, and/or at a relative humidity of at least 30%, absorbing of moisture or solving in water of said support layer being promoted for exposing said skin-protective ingredient containing layer to skin of the wearer for permitting transfer of said skin-protective ingredient to skin of the wearer.

Claim 9 (currently amended): An absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a liquid-pervious top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent core sandwiched between said top sheet and said back sheet;

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer applied in a stripe, dot, or lattice~~predetermined~~ pattern on one surface of said top sheet such that a skin-protective ingredient is released from said one surface of said top sheet and transferred to skin of a wearer for forming an oily film on skin of the wearer;

a support layer formed over said skin-protective ingredient containing layer for retaining said skin-protective ingredient on said one surface of said top sheet and isolating said skin-protective ingredient containing layer from skin of the wearer, said support layer being soluble in water;

Claim 10 (currently amended): An absorbent article comprising:

a skin-protective ingredient containing layer applied in a stripe, dot, or lattice~~predetermined~~ pattern to one surface of said top sheet such that a skin-protective ingredient is released from said one surface of said top sheet and transferred to skin of a wearer for forming an oily film on skin of the wearer, said skin-protective ingredient containing layer being in a liquified state at 35 C or higher; and

said support layer being formed of at least one compound selected from among a group consisting of polyethylene oxide having a molecular

Claim 11 (previously presented): The absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein said support layer is formed of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of polyethylene oxide having a molecular weight of from 100 to 500,000, and polypropylene glycol having a molecular weight of from 100 to 10,000.

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